

DRAYTON RURAL VITAL STATISTICS.

The following is the annual report for 1919 of Dr. Macqueen, Medical Officer of Health to the Drayton Rural District Council :—

NATURAL AND SOCIAL CONDI- TIONS OF THE DISTRICT.

I. POPULATION.

At the last census (1911) the population was 7,403. At the middle of 1914 it was estimated at 7,485. For 1919 the Registrar General gives the population as 6,942 for the birth-rate and 6,664 for the death-rate. The death-rate population excludes all non-civilian males whether serving at home or abroad, and is based mainly upon the rationing returns. The birth-rate (and marriage-rate) population consists of the death-rate or civilian population, plus all non-civilians enlisted, whether serving at home or abroad. The non-civilians have been distributed over all the districts in the country in proportion to their estimated civilian population. In the Housing Return (October, 1919) the population was estimated to be 7,361. The birth, marriage, and death-rates are calculated upon the Registrar-General's estimates.

II. PHYSICAL FEATURES AND GENERAL CHARACTERISTICS.

The rural district of Drayton comprises an area of upwards of 50,000 acres situate in the great central plain

of England. The general elevation of the district is about 300 feet above sea level. The district extends from the parishes of Moreton Say, Adderley and Norton-in-Hales on the north, to the parish of Woore on the north-east, where the three counties, Cheshire, Staffordshire, and Shropshire join; to the south as far as and including the parishes of Hinstock and Childs Ercall, and the villages of Eaton and Little Bolas. On the east the boundary is formed by the river Tern and the parish of Cheswardine. On the west it extends to and includes the parish of Stoke-on-Tern, the parish and village of Hodnet and the hamlet of Marchamley. The formation throughout is the new red sandstone, which attains its greatest elevation in England in the Hawkestone Hills near the western limit of the district. The river Tern, in its winding course to the Severn, drains the greater portion of the district. The land in general contour is level, well watered, highly cultivated, and there are some finely timbered residential estates. The population is employed chiefly in agriculture.

III. VITAL STATISTICS.

MARRIAGES.—The number of marriages registered during the year was 33—at the rate of rather less than 5 per 1,000 of the population.

BIRTHS.—One hundred and forty-six births (77 boys and 69 girls) were registered in the year. Of these, fifteen (7 boys and 8 girls) were illegitimate. The birth-rate was 21 per 1,000 of the estimated population.

DEATHS.—One hundred and sixteen deaths were registered, giving a death-rate of 17.4 per 1,000 of the estimated population per annum.

INFANT MORTALITY.—Fourteen infants under one year of age died during the twelve months. Of these, two boys were illegitimate. The infant mortality rate was 95 per 1,000 births.

CLASSIFICATION OF THE DEATHS.—Of the 116 deaths 43 were of persons of the age of 65 years and upwards, and 21 under five years. Eight died of old age or senile decay, the average age attained being 85 years; 16 deaths were certified as due to heart disease; 13 to influenza; 11 to cancer; 9 to pneumonia; 5 to bronchitis; 7 to pulmonary tuberculosis; 7 to cerebral hemorrhage; 2 to kidney disease; 1 to puerperal fever; 6 to premature birth; and 3 to congenital debility. There was **one suicide, and two deaths** occurred from violence apart from suicide. Four deaths were not certified. Nine inquests were held and the cause of the deaths certified by H.M.'s Coroner.

AMOUNT OF POOR LAW RELIEF.

The cost of poor law relief in the Drayton Union (which includes Drayton and Blore Heath Rural Districts, and Market Drayton Urban District), during the year ended 30th September, 1919, was: (a) Institutional relief £933 10s. 8d.; average cost per head per week 9s. 8d. (b) Outdoor relief £605 0s. 6d.; average per head per week of persons relieved 3s. 2d.; average per case per week 5s. 6d.

IV SANITARY CIRCUMSTANCES OF THE DISTRICT.

WATER. — The Market Drayton Water Company supplies Betton and Ridgwardine. The spring selected for the supply of Norton-in-Hales has been tested and found to be constant and sufficient in quantity for supplying the houses in the village. The rest of the district is dependent on pump and draw wells. One sample taken from a pump well at Peplow was found on examination to be unsafe for drinking purposes.

SANITARY INSPECTION. — The number of houses inspected during the year, either in connection with outbreaks of infectious disease, or in consequence

of complaints, or in the course of a systematic survey, was 564. The number of legal notices sent was 16; informal notices 41. The number of such notices complied with was 50. The sanitary matters referred to in the notices were (a) Deficient or objectionable water supply 8. (b) New drains to be constructed or old drains to be amended, 31. (c) New closets to be provided or old ones to be amended in construction, 5. (d) Houses damp or dirty, or admitting rain or weather, or otherwise in a bad sanitary condition, 3. (e) Offensive accumulations of all kinds, 28. Houses disinfected after infectious disease (other than phthisis) 25. Houses disinfected in cases of phthisis, 7. Privies converted to water closets, 5. Private wells reconstructed or improved, 8. Proceedings before the magistrates, 1 (for exposing a child whilst suffering from infectious disease). Bakehouses, slaughterhouses, factories and workshops, and canal boats are regularly inspected.

SCHOOLS.—The water supply and drainage of the schools throughout the district are satisfactory. All the schools except Woore were closed for periods in February, March and April, on account of the prevalence of influenza. Woodseaves, Cheswardine, and Woore schools were closed from the 1st to 24th October in consequence of the epidemic of measles. The closure of Cheswardine school was extended to 14th November, because of the continued prevalence of measles in that parish. Norton-in-Hales school was closed, also on account of measles, from 9th to 31st October. Hodnet boys' and Hodnet Heber Percy girls' schools were closed from 24th November to 5th December on account of mumps, and Adderley school was closed from 1st to 12th December on account of influenza.

FOOD.

MILK SUPPLY.—The number of cowkeepers and milk sellers on the regis-

ter is 78. Each was inspected once during the year. The following defects were found in cowsheds:—(a) ventilation 3; (b) lighting 3; (c) structure of floor 2; (d) drainage 4; (e) cleanliness 7. Notices verbal and written 14. All these notices were complied with.

PREVALENCE OF AND CONTROL OVER INFECTIOUS DISEASES.

One hundred and thirty-one cases of infectious disease were notified during the year:—Eighty-nine of measles, twelve of pneumonia, seven each of scarlet fever, diphtheria and tuberculosis, four of malaria (overseas), three of erysipelas, one of puerperal fever, and one of ophthalmia neonatorum. Five of the diphtheria and two of the scarlet fever patients were removed to the Isolation hospital. No death occurred. The epidemic of measles began towards the end of September at Woodseaves, Cheswardine, Woore, and Norton, and reached its height in October—sixty-five cases being notified in that month. Fortunately, only one death occurred. Influenza was very prevalent in the months of February and March. The worst cases were followed by pneumonia, and thirteen deaths occurred. Diphtheria antitoxin is used in all cases of diphtheria. The supply and injection of the anti-toxin is paid for by the Council. In all notified cases of infectious disease, printed instructions are sent to the occupiers of the infected houses, stating the precautions to be taken in order to prevent the spread of infection, and as to keeping children from school. Notices are also sent to the school teachers stating the periods children from infected houses are to be excluded from school. Where insanitary conditions have been found they were reported to the Council or dealt with by the sanitary inspector. At the termination of all cases, and immediately after removal of patients to the Isolation hospital, disinfection and efficient cleansing of infected rooms are carried out under the direction of the sanitary inspector. At the

Isolation hospital a steam disinfecter is used for clothing, etc., before the patient is allowed to be discharged. The Isolation hospital contains sixteen beds in four wards and the nurses' quarters.

SMALLPOX.—VACCINATION IN 1919.—The following statistics of vaccination have been supplied by the vaccination officer :—Of the 146 children born and registered, 85 were successfully vaccinated, 11 died unvaccinated, 18 were not of age at the end of the year, 3 were removed from the district, the vaccination of one was postponed by medical certificate, and 28 remained unvaccinated because their parents had conscientious objections to vaccination, and made statutory declarations to that effect. No primary vaccinations or revaccinations have been performed by the medical officer of health under the Public Health (Smallpox Prevention) Regulations, 1917. The joint Isolation hospital for smallpox is at Prees Heath.

HOUSING.

I.—GENERAL HOUSING CONDITIONS IN THE DISTRICT.—1. The number of dwelling-houses in the district is 1,764. Of these 1,300 are working-class houses (at rentals from 1s. 9d. to 7s. 6d. per week). 2. The estimated population at the middle of 1919 was 7,361. The pre-war population (1914) was 7,485. 3. The net estimate of housing needs to meet the shortage is 120 :—(a) Unsatisfied demand for houses (taking account of growth of population, overcrowding, etc.) 30 ; (b) replace other dwellings which are unfit for human habitation, and cannot be made fit 43 ; (c) replace other houses which, although they cannot at present be regarded as unfit for human habitation, fall definitely below a reasonable standard 47 ; total 120. The Council resolved to erect 108 houses on 21 sites, comprising about 15 acres of land, in the parish of Cheswardine, Child's Ercall, Hinstock, Hodnet,

Moreton Say, Norton-in-Hales, Stoke-upon-Tern, Sutton-upon-Tern, and Woore. The average number of houses per acre is 8. The cost of the sites, building, fencing, etc., is estimated at £100,843.

II.—OVERCROWDING.—The number of houses with more than two occupants per room is 30, and the total number of occupiers is 220. Seven houses intended for one family are now occupied by two or more families.

III.—FITNESS OF HOUSES.—As the sanitary inspector was only demobilised from the Army in February, few houses were inspected under Housing (Inspection of District) Regulations, 1910. The number of houses inspected was 9, all of which were thought to be unfit for human habitation. In two of the houses the defects were remedied without closing orders, and seven are still under consideration.

IV.—UNHEALTHY AREAS.—No areas in the district can be described as unhealthy.

Reprinted from the "Newport & Market Drayton Advertiser," Aug. 21st, 1920.

